

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 02021 01 OF 02 022130Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----002298 022138Z /66

R 022045Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6466
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 2021

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SHUM, NU
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH SOMOZA: APRIL 29

REF: STATE 1945

SUMMARY: ON APRIL 29, THE AMB MET WITH PRES SOMOZA FOR ONE HOUR. PRES SOMOZA STRESSED HIS DESIRE FOR DIALOG AND THE AMB RESPONDED THAT HE FELT THAT THERE EXISTED SENTIMENT AMONG A MINORITY OF THE OPPOSITION LEADERSHIP FOR A RENEWAL OF DIALOG. THE AMB SAID THAT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE BUSINESS SECTOR WAS ESSENTIAL IF A NATIONAL SOLUTION WERE TO BE FOUND. OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED WERE FOREIGN LOANS, THE RADIO MUNDIAL CASE, THE DESIGNATION OF AN EMB CONTACT IN THE NATIONAL GUARD (GN), AND THE CHARITON CASE. FINALLY, SOMOZA WAS CONCERNED RE US ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE GON AND VERY CRITICAL OF US POLICY IN NICARAGUA. END SUMMARY.

1. THE AMB RAISED THE ISSUE OF SOMOZA'S REQUEST FOR A REPLY TO THE GON'S NOTE TO THE DEPT LAST FEBRUARY. HE INFORMED SOMOZA THAT THE NOTED HAD BEEN ANSWERED ON APRIL 4. SOMOZA ACKNOWLEDGED HE HAD FOUND
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OUT THAT A REPLY HAD BEEN RECEIVED AND SEEMED SATISFIED WITH IT.

2. SOMOZA TOLD THE AMB THAT HE WAS PLEASED BY THE RESULTS OF HIS MEETINGS WITH PARENTS OF STRIKING STUDENTS, WHICH SETTLED THE STUDENT SCHOOL OCCUPATIONS AND THE HUNGER STRIKES. SOMOZA SHOWED THE AMB A DOSSIER ON SOME MEMBERS OF THE PARENTS' GROUP AND INDICATED THAT THOSE WERE LONG-TIME FSLN COLLABORATORS. SOMOZA STRESSED HIS BELIEF

THAT IF FSLN PARTISANS COULD TALK TO HIM, SO SHOULD THE "CAPITALISTS" AND OTHER OPPOSITION MEMBERS.

3. THE AMB SAID THAT HIS CONTACTS INDICATED A MOVE TOWARD A MORE FAVORABLE VIEW OF DIALOG. HE SAID HE TILL FELT SOME OPPOSITION LEADERS CONTINUED TO THINK THAT THE COMBINATION OF STREET DEMONSTRATIONS AND FSLN ATTACKS COULD CONVINCE THE BUSINESS SECTOR TO PARTICIPATE IN ANOTHER GENERAL STRIKE WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO A COUP. THE AMB SAID THAT THERE WERE, HOWEVER, CONSERVATIVES WILLING TO DISCUSS A POLITICAL SOLUTION FOR 1981. A MINORITY OF LEADERS, HE SAID, WANT AN EARLY PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

4. THE AMB WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE BUSINESS SECTOR WAS CRUCIAL. IT COULD PROPOSE ITEMS WHICH COULD LEAD TO A NATIONAL SOLUTION. THE AMB TOLD SOMOZA THAT THE BUSINESS SECTOR FELT APPROVAL NOW OF THE COPALAR PROGRAM WOULD BE ILL-ADVISE. (COMMENT: COPALAR IS A CONTROVERSIAL, \$400-500 MILLION HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT FOR WHICH CANADIAN BRAZILIAN AND VENEXUELAN FINANCING IS BEING SOUTH. PRES SOMOZA RECENTLY TOOK RESPONSIBILITY FOR OBTAINING FINANCING THE PROJECT AWAY FROM VICE MINISTER REMY RENER WHEN THE LATTER SOUGHT TO FIRE EDDIE RODRIGUEZ-FELIU, A NICARAGUAN- NATURALIZED CUBAN FINANCIAL ADVISOR TO THE GON).)

5. SOMOZA SAID THAT THE BUSINESSMEN WERE JUST LOOKING FOR EXCUSES TO BE CRITICAL. HE REFERRED TO THE AMB'S STATEMENT AT THEIR LAST MEETING THAT FOREIGN BANKS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT COMMISSIONS THEY HAD TO PAY TO CONFIDENTIAL

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MIDDLEMEN (REFTEL.) SOMOZA JUSTIFIED SUCH COMMISSIONS. HE SAID THAT, WHEN HE HAD DEALT WITH ONLY FOUR BANKS, HE HAD NOT RECEIVED SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT. THEREFORE, HE HAD TO TURN TO PEOPLE WHO COULD PUT TOGETHER COMBINATIONS OF MANY SMALLER BANKS. THE GREATER EFFORT REQUIRED LED TO HIGHER COMMISSIONS AND THE CRITICS ONLY WANTED A SHARE IN THE COMMISSIONS. SUCH CRITICS WERE GREEDY AND UNREASONABLE.

SOMOZA ALSO CRITICIZED REMY RENER (THE SON OF SENATE PRESIDENT PABLO RENER) FOR HAVING ENCOURAGED PRIVATE SECTOR ATTACKS ON RODRIGUES FELIU.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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R 022045Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6467

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SANL VADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAGUA 2021

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6. THE AMB REITERATED THAT HIS ONLY INTEREST WAS THAT MANY REPUTABLE BUSINESSMEN WERE CONCERNED. APPROVAL OF COPALAR NOW WOULD CREATE BAD FEELINGS. SOMOZA SEEMED TO AGREE THAT IMMEDIATE APPROVAL OF COPALAR WAS NOT REQUIRED.

7. THE AMB SAID THAT SOME BUSINESS CHAMBERS WOULD BE MEETING DURING THE COMING WEEK TO DISCUSS THE RADIO MUNDIAL AFFAIR. HE SAID THESE GROUPS THOUGHT THAT SUSPENSION OF THE SPECIFIC NEWS PROGRAM CONCERNED, AND NOT THE STATION ITSELF, WOULD BE MORE JUST. SOMOZA OUTLINED TO THE AMB THE SOLUTION WHICH WAS TO BE ANNOUNCED LATER THAT DAY: A 15-DAY SUSPENSION FOR THE STATION, 90 DAYS FOR THE PROGRAM.

8. SOMOZA COMPLAINED THAT NO ONE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WANTED TO TALK TO HIM. HE MENTIONED A RECENT SPEECH BY BANK PRESIDENT MONTEALEGRE (BANCO NICARAGUENSE) WHICH WAS CRITICAL OF THE GON AND SAID THAT, WHEN HE STEPPED DOWN, HE WANTED ONLY THE SAME PROTECTIONS HE HAD GIVEN WEALTHY INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS MONTEALEGRE AND PELLAS. THE AMB ASKED SOMOZA ABOUT WHETHER HE BELIEVED A PERSON ANTAGONISTIC TO SOMOZA'S INTERESTS MIGHT BE LECTED BECAUSE OF THE POLARIZED SITUATION.

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SOMOZA REPLIED THAT HE IS OPEN TO MAJOR ELECTORAL REFORM. BUT, IF A RADICAL WERE ELECTED, HE DOUBTED THE GN WOULD ALLOW ITS INTERESTS TO BE THREATENED. THE GN WILL ONLY ACCEPT A CANDIDATE THAT WILL PRACTICE FAIR PLAY.

9. THE AMB SAID THAT, WITH PEREX VEGA'S DEATH, THE EMB HAD NO SPECIAL CHANNEL TO THE GN TO VERIFY OR DENY HUMAN RIGHTS ALLEGATIONS. SOMOZA SAID HE WOULD THINK ABOUT WHOM TO ASSIGN.

10. SOMOZA THEN ATTACKED US POLICY IN NICARAGUA. HE WAS CONCERNED

ABOUT NEW FSLN ATTACKS. EACH DEATH BROUGHT THE DESIRE FOR REVENGE, HE SAID, AND THE USG WAS NOT HELPING TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION. SOMOZA ALSO EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN ABOUT DISTORTED OPINIONS IN THE

USG ABOUT NICARAGUA. HE SAID HIS NEPHEW, BERNABE SOMOZA, HAD RETURNED FROM CONTACTS IN WASHINGTON AND REPORTED HE HAD FOUND ATTITUDES

THAT THE RADIO AND TV CODE WAS OPPRESSIVE AND THAT MAJOR "TACHITO" SOMOZA OR OTHERS IN THE GON WERE INVOLVED IN THE CHAMORRO ASSASSINATION. THE AMB SAID THESE LATTER ATTITUDES REPRESENTED VOX POPULI HERE BUT WE DIDN'T GIVE THIS MUCH CREDENCE. SOMOZA SAID THE RADIO AND TV CODE WAS BEING AMENDED IN THE CONGRESS. THE AMB SAID IT WOULD BE IDEAL IF THE PRESS COULD POLICE THEMSELVES AS HAPPENS IN THE US. SOMOZA REPLIED THAT THE REFORM OF THE CODE WAS ALREADY DECIDED.

11. THE AMB TOLD SOMOZA THAT HE HAD NOT RECEIVED A RESPONSE FROM WASHINGTON ON US POLICY VIS-A-VIS IFI'S (REFTTEL, BUT WOULD INFORM HIM AS SON AS ONE WAS RECEIVED.

12. THE AMB THANKED SOMOZA FOR MOVING CHARITON TO THE HOSPITAL. SOMOZA SAID THAT MOVING IM OUT OF THE MILITARY HOSPITAL "HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, AMBASSADORS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MANAGU02021
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
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Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
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Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2520006
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH SOMOZA: APRIL 29
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SHUM, NU, (SOMOZA DEBAYLE, ANASTASIO), (SOLAUN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2c3ad593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014